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SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION, OCTOBER 8-15: ISRAELI RAID
IN SYRIA; IRAQI COMPENSATION; STUDENT UNION ELECTIONS

¶11. SUMMARY: The somewhat delayed diatribes against Israel for its October 5 attack on Syria have a tired and formulaic quality in Kuwait's Arabic press. Two editorialists denounce Sharon's villainy but note that Syria must institute democratic reforms and stop its support for terrorist groups if regional stability is to be achieved.

One commentator writes that Iraqi compensation payments to Kuwait for damage during the 1990-91 occupation are unjust as they would "make the Iraqi people pay for Saddam's crimes." An MP states that the National Assembly rejects Iraqi efforts to "pressure" Kuwait to drop the compensation demand.

Islamists have won Kuwait University's student union elections for the twenty-fifth consecutive year, but for the first time received less than 50 percent of the vote. END SUMMARY.

¶12. News Stories: In response to Iraqi Governing Council calls to Kuwait to forgive Iraq's debts to Kuwait reported in all newspapers on October 15, Al-Rai Al-Aam reports that MP Dr. Faisal Al-Musallam stated that the National Assembly totally rejects Iraqi pressure regarding compensation due to Kuwait.

All newspapers report on October 15 that sixteen MPs from Kuwait's National Assembly issued a statement in which they hailed the Intifada and condemned Israel's actions against the Palestinian people.

Al-Watan reports that according to an official source, the Kuwaiti POW search team in Iraq expects to find the remains of 400 Kuwaiti POWs in a number of mass graves in Iraq.

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports that Islamist student groups have won Kuwait University's student union elections for the twenty-fifth consecutive year, but failed for the first time to capture 50 percent of the vote.

Editorials:

¶13. "Compensate Iraq" Liberal Abdellatif Al-Duaij wrote in independent Al-Qabas (10/8): "The main goal for the compensations [from Iraq to neighboring countries] was to undermine the integrity of the Iraqi regime and to agitate the Iraqi people to topple the regime. Today, after the fall of Saddam and his regime, this political goal of the compensations is null and void. The call for compensations now will be a tool to humiliate the Iraqi people and lead to the strengthening of those who oppose the new situation in Iraq. It is not just for the Iraqi people to pay for Saddam's crimes."

¶14. "Sharon's Terrorism and the Arab Alternative" Khalid Al-Saad wrote in independent Al-Seyassah (10/9): "Sharon has set fire in the Road Map plan and turned it into ashes. [He] is programmed to kill and wage wars against Arabs. Israel's behavior against the Palestinians demonstrates to the Syrians that they must deal vigilantly with the dangers posed by Sharon. The Syrians must also adopt democratic reforms by boosting freedom and human rights and achieve national reconciliation among their political powers."

¶15. "Seizing Syria" Director of Kuwait University's Center for Future and Strategic Studies, Dr. Shamlan Al-Essa wrote in independent Al-Seyassah (10/13): "We have to admit that the struggle [between Syria and the US] is unbalanced and that the Zionist powers in Washington are attempting to drag Syria into a war in the region. Syria must reform its policies and stop supporting terrorists, reconsider its relations with Hizbullah and ask Arab countries to intervene between Syria and the US."

¶6. "Damascus and the 'Long Arm' Message"
Liberal Dr. Ayed Al-Manna wrote in independent Al-Watan (10/9): "Israel's raid against Syria [on October 5] was not aimed at Palestinian bases as Israel claimed. Rather, it was a message to Damascus that Israel can reach it at any time. Israel's raid against Syria has disclosed a deficiency in Syria's military readiness and we hope that the Syrian government will reform its military institutions."

¶7. "OPEC and Syria"
Dr. Jallal Al-Rasheed wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (10/9): "We believe that Arabs and Islamic countries must assist Syria at this time. Arab and Islamic oil-producing countries must exploit this opportunity to remind the world that that cards of the game are still in our hands. As long as the world considers oil a substantial commodity, then they must understand that our need for security is not less important than their need for oil. Therefore, industrialized [Arab] countries must defend Syria's security because Arabs would not be the only losers."

¶8. "The Secret Proposal and the Public Goal"
Liberal Dr. Ayed Al-Manna wrote in independent Al-Watan (10/13): "Several days ago, Sharon presented three secret conditions to the American administration to pass on to Syria to implement or else Syria would be attacked. Sharon realizes that these aggressive and insane terms are just excuses to justify the Zionist goal which is to destroy any Arab country that could pose a threat to the Zionist State. The real justification behind his conditions is to create a new reality to escape the Palestinian crisis. There is no doubt that Sharon ignores many facts and that there is no relation between Syria and the events in Palestine. He is only searching for an excuse to export his crisis abroad."

¶9. "Israel's Crimes Will Reach the Entire World"
Issam Al-Fulaij wrote in independent Al-Watan (10/15): "There will be no peace with Israel as long as it exists, not because the Palestinians reject occupation but because Israel will extend its reach over neighboring countries. I am still convinced that the international Zionists and Mossad were behind the September 11 attacks in the US. There were no Jews in the two buildings at the time of the incident. It is time for the world to realize the truth about the flashiest Israeli regime because who ever is not harmed now, will be harmed soon by them."

¶10. "Let's Admit It: War is Coming"
Dr. Abdullah Al-Hamadi wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (10/15): "Arab and Islamic countries are currently in a state of war but unfortunately, we refuse to admit it. Unless our countries adopt internal reforms to grant their people more freedom, then we will be incapable of confronting the Jewish campaign aimed against us and the Arab people would then welcome any change implemented by foreign parties."

JONES